United Nations A/C.2/61/SR.5

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
13 October 2006

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 5th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 3 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Atiyanto ..... (Indonesia)

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06-55176 (E)

In the absence of Ms. Intelmann (Estonia), Mr. Atiyanto (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Kryzhanivski** (Ukraine), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the newly established GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, said that they were making headway in developing democratic institutions and a free market, and in integrating into the global economy and were working to create a free trade area, based on equality and mutual benefit, although much still remained to be done before that could be fully implemented.

2. Sustainable development issues were an indispensable part of the work of the United Nations system. Given the reality of environmental degradation and the increasing occurrence of natural disasters the organizations of the United Nations system and Governments must push on with effective achievement of the environmental goals and targets.

3. Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy remained a priority issue for the GUAM States, and they looked forward to a meaningful exchange of views on the subject. Although progress had been made, it was obvious that the international community would need to provide further support to those countries. It would be beneficial if the Committee could adopt a resolution on those issues.

4. It was necessary to build upon the outcomes of the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Summit to ensure full and effective achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Priority should also be given to bringing stability to international financial and trading systems, and to increasing interaction among the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

5. Recognizing the vital role of trade in development, the GUAM States were in favour of early resumption of the talks in the Doha Development Round. Strengthening the role of the World Trade Organization and transforming it into a truly universal organization would contribute to improving the international trading system. At the same time, the process of accession to the Organization should be facilitated.

6. **Mr. Shobokshi** (Saudi Arabia) said that his country attached tremendous importance to protection of the environment and believed that environmental problems should be tackled objectively in the light of scientific facts and with due regard for development paths and the importance of environmental technology transfer to developing countries. It was constantly seeking to ensure oil-market stability and to provide reassurances concerning supplies. Indeed, a forum for dialogue between oil-producing and -consuming countries was to be established in Riyadh with a view to limiting price fluctuations.

7. The cooperation of all partners was crucial to implementation of the outcomes of United Nations conferences, which were instrumental to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the strengthening of sustainable development; blame, narrow-mindedness and self-interest had no place in such a context. Constructive, reasonable and flexible approaches would be essential to eliminate the difficulties of the previous session concerning the draft resolution on the subject of strengthening the Economic and Social Council. He looked forward to the recommendations on the crucial subject of system-wide coherence, and he stressed the importance of national ownership of development projects in accordance with priorities set by developing countries and of respect for the character, culture, values and beliefs particular to each individual country.

8. The increasingly complex shift towards a global economy was dependent on advanced scientific knowledge and technology, including access to comprehensive and accurate information, all of which posed an enormous challenge to the ability of most countries to compete on international markets and preserve their own identities. The answer lay in their commitment to such matters as the ongoing development of education and training and greater use of advanced technology across the board. Global trade was a major source of financing for development, yet the scales were tipped in favour of the developed countries. The World Trade Organization (WTO) should globalize as soon as possible by introducing easier and more flexible conditions for membership within the prescribed rules and with no demand of any higher than usual commitments.

9. Financing for development was still mainly sourced at the domestic level, where it was consequently important to pursue the right economic

policies and stimulate the saving and investment that would in turn attract direct foreign investment and skills transfer. Successful reform of the international monetary and trade system should be assured through existing institutions, with simultaneous strengthening of the role of developing countries in the global economy and their involvement in elaborating international norms and standards with a wider voluntary application.

10. Saudi Arabia had already assisted developing countries to the tune of over US$ 83 billion by 2004 and its foreign assistance remained stable at about 4 per cent of gross national product. A total of 95 countries had benefited from such assistance, which was channelled through the Saudi Fund for Development as well as through multilateral funds and institutions. Saudi Arabia had also granted over US$ 6 billion in debt relief.

11. **Mrs. Mladineo** (Croatia) said that the Committee had a responsibility to continue making concerted efforts to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals.

12. Given the extraordinary inequalities in opportunity that existed both within and across countries, her delegation believed that financing for development was one area that deserved priority attention. As a middle-income country in transition, Croatia stood ready to share its experience. It had learned that clear country ownership was needed in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, that all domestic resources must be mobilized, and that women must be given a role in development and granted equal access to financial resources. In addition, transparency and financial management must be enhanced in government and the broader public sector so as to accelerate key structural reforms.

13. Croatia welcomed the increased resources that had become available for official development assistance and it supported the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It would be important to provide further capacity-building in countries in transition in order to promote their active engagement in the international development arena. Such countries should participate as owners, not just as borrowers, in the Bretton Woods institutions. Croatia would thus be fully engaged in the creation of a forward-looking resolution on bringing countries with economies in transition into the world economy.

14. Croatia intended to propose a resolution to have the year 2011 proclaimed the International Year of Forests and it would continue working on a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards and contributing to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation for the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

15. Due to the rapid growth of its urban areas, Croatia was very interested in strengthening the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and in the continued implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). Combating corruption was another priority for Croatia, and it would work to ensure powerful resolution on that issue. Lastly, it was looking forward to the upcoming discussions on international migration and development.

16. **Mr. Chem** (Cambodia) said that since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, Cambodia had introduced several cross-cutting strategies aimed at building a society that was, inter alia, socially cohesive, educationally advanced, and free from hunger, disease and inequality. One of them, the National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010, focused on four areas: fighting corruption, legal and judicial reform, public administration reform and armed forces reform and demobilization.

17. In recent years, Cambodia had made progress in reducing poverty, combating HIV/AIDS and improving standards of living for the population. However, in many developing countries the situation was not much improved and billions of people around the world continued to live on less than US$ 2 a day.

18. Eradication of poverty required the cooperation of developed countries, international institutions and the private sector and the sharing of advances in science, technology and knowledge. Trade and investment were also crucial for the economic take-off of the least developed countries. He appealed for wider market access for the products of those countries and stressed that the international community must ensure that the commitments agreed to at international conferences and summits were translated into concrete action and that all developed countries should honour their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GNP

for official development assistance, with 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent going to least developed countries. In addition, the rhetoric of debt write-off should be translated into debt-for-development swaps. At the same time, new sources of financing for development should be sought and the global partnership for development should be consolidated in order to enhance long-term peace, stability and security throughout the world.

19. **Mr. Kazykhanov** (Kazakhstan) said that Member States should continue to be firmly committed to comprehensive and harmonious development based on equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit. Implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome would remain an important priority for the Organization and full and timely implementation of the decisions and recommendations contained in the outcome documents of the multilateral forums held during the past six years in Monterrey, Johannesburg, Brussels, Almaty and Mauritius would be essential for efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

20. The first summit of landlocked developing countries, held in Havana three weeks previously, had once again reiterated the commitment of such countries to the full and timely implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. Kazakhstan expressed full support for the landlocked developing countries emerging from conflict, in the context of enabling them to rehabilitate and reconstruct their political, social and economic infrastructures and assisting them in achieving their development priorities in accordance with the goals and targets of the Programme of Action.

21. Kazakhstan stood for the global partnership for development through the establishment of an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trade and financial system, considering it essential for the developed countries to comply with their international obligations, including that of ensuring the fair and timely implementation of the development dimensions of the Doha Work Programme.

22. Kazakhstan's goal was to join the ranks of the most competitive economies and, to that end, it had developed an innovative economic development programme, financing relevant projects through a special national fund. The country's gross domestic product had increased by 10 per cent on average over the past five years and the Government had increased spending on health care, education and employment.

23. Kazakhstan attached great importance to cooperation on a broad range of issues within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Community and other regional economic organizations and, to deal with common issues involving inter alia management of economic, trade, transit transport and water and energy capacities, it was working to establish a Union of Central Asian States.

24. In order to ensure reliability of energy delivery, it was necessary to invest more in primary and secondary production methods. In that context, it was extremely important to provide support to oil producers and exporters, and to address issues of further lowering of tariff and non-tariff barriers for imported manufactured goods. As a major exporter of energy resources, Kazakhstan would continue to pursue its policy of ensuring delivery to world markets through multiple routes. Introduction of environmentally sound and energy-efficient models of production and consumption was one of the important preconditions for sustainable development. Wise selection of energy supply strategies, use of energy-saving technologies and lower energy consumption were especially relevant.

25. Transboundary water resources represented one of the most important issues in the Central Asian region. At the recent informal summit of heads of Central Asian States in Astana, Kazakhstan, the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan had taken practical steps towards establishing a regional consortium for solving issues of water resources and hydro energy in Central Asia and had decided to revive the international fund for Aral Sea salvation, in order to coordinate implementation of regional projects on mitigating problems caused by the socio-economic and ecological crisis in the region. Kazakhstan urged the international community to provide more effective assistance to the Aral Sea region and to link the solution of that problem to the need to bring together the three aspects of sustainable development, namely, economic growth, social development and protection of the environment.

26. **Mr. Almabrok** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that while the world economy had grown significantly in the current year, and had moved towards a wider and more comprehensive base as a result of economic transformations effected by some developing countries, the challenge facing the international community remained the extent to which such growth could be

maintained in an atmosphere of mutual trust between developed and developing countries. Firm and stable international economic relations, non-marginalization of the developing countries, particularly the least developed, and laying the foundations for an equitable non-discriminatory economic order, would be the basis for a fruitful international cooperation that would permit achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

27. Despite the fact that the results of the 2005 World Summit had not fully met the expectations of the developing countries in terms of guaranteeing economic growth and sustainable development, it could be hoped that practical steps would be taken to implement the recommendations of the Summit relating to support and financing for development programmes. He stressed the importance of increasing official development assistance and noted that funding of development plans and programmes in the developing countries was still inadequate in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness.

28. United Nations agencies and programmes must assume a major role in supporting development in Africa, paying special attention to strengthening the goals of economic and social integration sought by the African Union, as well as supporting the initiatives and projects of the New Partnership for the Development of Africa (NEPAD).

29. It was important to work towards finding a sound and non-discriminatory international trade regime, under which international trade disputes would be addressed in a manner that would guarantee the developing countries fair prices and market access for their exports. Obtaining membership in the World Trade Organization must be made easier, so that it would become an international forum where matters of trade could be discussed with transparency, safeguarding the economic interests of all parties. In that context Libya believed that the suspension of the Doha Round had had a negative impact on efforts to make the international trade order more equitable and more development-oriented, and would encourage the appearance of new protective trends.

30. The problem of developing countries' debts remained one of the main obstacles to the funding of development programmes in the developing countries. Despite the efforts that had been made to cancel or reduce some of those debts, the poor countries were still unable to fund development programmes and raise the levels of their national health and educational services.

31. While globalization presented new opportunities to developing countries in the fields of trade, investment, flow of capital and technological advancement, it also imposed serious challenges that might include acute monetary crisis and dangerous economic dependency. The real cause for concern was that globalization and liberalization of trade had widened the income gap between developed and developing countries. It was imperative to find a global strategy that would make globalization beneficial to all.

32. Boosting sustainable development in its three elements, the economic, the social and the environmental, represented a basis for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but it was important to strike a balance among those elements. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was determined to fulfil its commitments concerning the Goals, through boosting its national economy, enhancing its performance in various fields, and encouraging foreign investment. In that context Libya hoped to gain the support of the Member States of the World Trade Organization in order to complete its enrolment in the organization, its application having been accepted in 2004.

33. Libya would also continue to contribute to implementation of the goals set by the African Union to achieve total economic and social integration between the countries of the continent. It was promoting a policy of financing productive and service projects in a number of countries on the continent, as well as increasing joint investment with other African countries in the agricultural and industrial fields and encouraging Libyan investors to increase their productive investment in the African continent.

34. **Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria) said that his delegation attached great importance to a true global partnership for development that recognized mutual responsibility without undermining the urgent need for targeted actions to address development challenges.

35. Nigeria was hopeful that the positive results of the macroeconomic and political reforms introduced by President Obasanjo would lead in 2007 to a new administration, thereby consolidating the economic, social and political gains made thus far. The country's National Economic Empowerment Development

Strategy was based on four key strategies: to reform the way the Government and its institutions worked, to develop the private sector as a driving force for growth, to implement a social charter and to reorient the country's value system. The Strategy would ultimately guide efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

36. Lasting peace was a prerequisite for attaining the lofty objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Nigeria would therefore continue to work assiduously to facilitate the speedy resolution of the conflicts in Africa. As a signatory to the African Peer Review Mechanism, it would not compromise on good economic, corporate, social and political governance. The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms would also remain high on his country's development agenda.

37. The indefinite suspension of the Doha Round had sent a negative signal regarding the commitment of some development partners on trade matters. If trade was to serve as an engine for growth, the outcome of the Doha Round must be satisfactory to developing countries, particularly the African countries. The negotiations therefore should be resumed and concluded soon, and their outcome must be truly supportive of sustainable development.

38. An equitable and representative international financial and trading system was essential. Developing countries must be given a greater voice and participation in decision-making in the relevant institutions and required sufficient policy space to develop, adopt and implement policies and measures best suited to their needs, all actions that would facilitate national ownership of their efforts.

39. Although the steps taken thus fair to address the external debt crisis were very welcome, further action was needed to tackle the crisis in a comprehensive manner in order to free resources for development. Current levels of ODA were grossly inadequate if developing countries were to be able to meet the goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals. Debt relief must not be used as an excuse to renege on the commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of GNP for ODA. Concerted action was also required to meet the special needs of the least developed countries. In addition, further discussion of migration issues following the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was essential, and his delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a global forum on migration and development.

40. It was to be hoped that when negotiations on strengthening the Economic and Social Council resumed, a consensus would emerge on the thorny question of providing the Council with additional resources to enable it effectively to discharge the new responsibilities entrusted to it by the World Summit Outcome.

41. **Mrs. Halliyadde** (Sri Lanka) said that although the world economy had grown during the preceding year, for the vast majority of developing countries growth had not been fast enough to reduce the widening rift between the rich and the poor. Many countries still faced a wide variety of constraints on their development, and the existing imbalances in the global economic, financial and trade regimes continued to worsen. She provided examples of such constraints and imbalances, and noted as well that the benefits of globalization, although considerable, had scarcely been equitable within States.

42. The pervasive sense of despair often generated by such problems sometimes fostered a public perception of social and economic exclusion, giving rise to violent campaigns that at time posed serious challenges to peace and security, thereby jeopardizing economic stability and growth. The implementation of internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, thus became a casualty, trapping vast population segments in a vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy, underdevelopment and marginalization.

43. The World Summit Outcome emphasized the urgency of prioritizing the development needs, reallocating necessary resources to key sectors and assigning specific tasks to Governments, international agencies and other stakeholders in order to attain internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in a timely manner. It was now imperative to implement the commitments in the Outcome, and States should review their national efforts undertaken to that end.

44. Her country had committed itself to achieving the Goals by the year 2015. Its economy had grown by an average of 4.6 per cent annually over the past decade and had weathered the adverse impact of the tsunami of 2005. Sri Lanka had registered human development achievements that were unique for a developing

country, and she cited statistics demonstrating that it had already met some of the Millennium Development Goal targets for primary school enrolment, gender equality and maternal and infant mortality rates. Ensuring environmental sustainability was also a major objective of her Government, and she provided statistics illustrating progress with respect to solid fuel use, safe drinking water and improved sanitation.

45. Nevertheless, a large segment of the population still lived below the poverty line. The critical challenge posed by their plight was being addressed through a creative programme based on the Mahinda Chintana, a policy document of the Government under the new President, Mahinda Rajapaksa.

46. Sri Lanka was a member of the Group of Eleven Forum, which had been established in September 2006 to advance its members' common interests in the global economic, investment and trade arenas and to pursue a targeted and results-oriented package of additional assistance. Her delegation urged the international community, especially donor countries, financial institutions and the United Nations Development Group, to support that initiative.

47. **Mr. Al-Ghanim** (Kuwait) said that the short time frame remaining for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals highlighted the need for a global drive to ensure adoption of the measures needed to save millions of lives and improve living standards. Mass action on an international scale was perhaps the only means of delivering the benefits of globalization to all insofar as development successes were difficult for any country to accomplish single-handedly. In that context he paid tribute to those countries that had already met the target set for official development assistance (ODA) and called on the others to do likewise. He also applauded the efforts of various developing countries on such issues as sound governance, anti-corruption and minority concerns, all of which had direct consequences for security, stability and sustainable development.

48. The Kuwait Fund for Economic Development, which was the world's second oldest development fund, had provided soft loans in excess of US$ 12.5 billion for the financing of infrastructural projects in over 100 developing countries, thus already doubling Kuwait's ODA target. It had also awarded grants worth millions of dollars in total. In addition to providing other funding assistance for numerous international and regional development programmes, Kuwait had recently announced a donation of US$ 300 million to the Islamic Development Bank in order to fight poverty in Africa. It had also given humanitarian assistance to countries affected by natural and man-made disasters. On the same theme of assistance, he said that he was greatly appreciative of Qatar's generous offer to host the first follow-up conference to the International Conference on Financing for Development.

49. Kuwait attached special importance to economic development, not least for its impact on other aspects of sustainable development. Efforts were therefore under way to liberalize trade and facilitate local and foreign investment, as well as turn the country into a main trading and financial centre. To that end, Kuwait was seeking the amendment of existing laws and regulations in line with the relevant international agreements, as well as the adoption of new bills on the subject. In the context of global trade, he hoped that developing countries would be involved in the decision-making as a way of ensuring fair consideration for their concerns and as a preliminary step to completion of the Doha Round. He also urged the continuance of such debt-relief measures as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

50. Kuwait had enlisted the help of scientific research centres in order to study the causes of climate change. International involvement was essential to mobilize resources for further investment in sustainable fuel technology in the global interest and also in view of the fact that economic growth in some cases was indirectly affected by unstable energy prices. For its part, Kuwait would continue to do its utmost to assist the developing countries achieve sustainable development and a more prosperous and settled life.

51. **Ms. Soto** (Costa Rica) said that progress towards sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development required significant improvements in governance at the international and national levels and with regard to respect for human rights. It was essential to analyse and take action to correct the unconscionable inconsistencies impeding that progress — incongruities that were sometimes glossed over owing to special interests or bias.

52. She would draw attention to only some of those inconsistencies. As to official development assistance, the developed countries spent three to five times more on agricultural subsidies than on ODA, and the amount

which the highly industrialized countries spent on their armed forces accounted for 83 per cent of world military expenditure, 10 times more than they provided in the form of aid. However, an increase in ODA alone, without improved market access for the products of developing countries and without an end to trade-distorting subsidies, would create increased dependence on external assistance for recipient countries and deeper poverty and inequality for non-recipient countries, inasmuch as trade was and always would be the primary source of revenue for some developing countries.

53. With regard to middle-income developing countries, she pointed out that the World Bank had identified approximately 94 such countries, some 60 of which were developing countries. For operational and analytical purposes, the World Bank's main criterion for classifying economies was gross national income (GNI) per capita. However, that criterion failed to take into account other determinants of development such as wealth distribution, the existence of pockets of poverty, and vulnerability to external impacts, including natural disasters. Moreover, GNI, viewed in isolation, often was used as a tool for denying middle-income countries the market access and international cooperation they required in order for their people to achieve a decent level of development. Development was much more than the absence of poverty; well-being, opportunity and dignity were essential as well. The fact that 870 million people in middle-income countries lived on less than US$ 2.00 per day demonstrated that if world poverty was to be reduced, those countries required assistance tailored to their particular needs. More concretely, the international community should reconsider its approach to poverty.

54. With respect to trade, according to the World Bank, the removal by the developed countries of significant impediments to merchandise trade could mean as many as 140 million fewer people living in dire poverty, a decline of 8 per cent. And yet, the Doha Round had come to a halt. In addition, support by wealthy countries for private sector development and export diversification in developing countries was counteracted by an escalation of tariffs on the latter's high-value imports, leaving their industries bereft of markets and discouraging them from entering new industries. Ironically, some OECD countries that had met their ODA targets had the most restrictive agricultural policies. Some 70 per cent of the people in developing countries depended directly or indirectly on agriculture, and they simply could not compete with developed countries whose agricultural sector was heavily subsidized.

55. Efforts to promote sustainable development often emphasized economic factors at the expense of social development and environmental protection, despite the fact that goods and services generated by the environment were the primary source of economic development. The developing countries had always been and would continue to be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, and the developed countries spent far more to subsidize fossil fuels than they devoted to research and development on clean technologies.

56. The value of the benefits which the ecosystems of the developing countries yielded at no cost to mankind far exceeded the cost of the debt burden imposed on many of those countries. Although one of those benefits, CO_2 absorption, was partially remunerated under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by incentives for reforestation, developing countries that protected their forests in the first place and avoided the need for reforestation received nothing in return. Costa Rica, Papua New Guinea and other developing countries were combating that unacceptable contradiction, the elimination of which would promote a healthier environment and sustainable development.

57. Given the nutritional and medicinal benefits that would flow from the discovery of new biological resources, most of which originated in tropical zones, it was essential to provide incentives to protect those zones. Such measures would benefit the economies of tropical countries while benefiting mankind as a whole. In the same context, international agreement should be reached to promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

58. In conclusion, her delegation called for greater coherence in the policies of developed countries and for a comprehensive in-depth analysis of all policies that had an impact on development, including those relating to trade, investment and the environment. It was also essential to give the developing countries a greater and more meaningful role in shaping the decisions that affected their development. All people in all countries must be able to enjoy the benefits of

globalization and trade liberalization, that, in turn, should lead to greater well-being and equality.

59. **Mr. Pang** Kwang Hwok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that to eradicate poverty and promote development, an enabling environment must be created and practical measures, such as substantial debt relief for developing and least developed countries, must be taken without delay. In addition, the developed countries should meet their commitment with regard to official development assistance. Noting that some developed countries questioned the efficiency of providing official development assistance to developing countries, citing various pretexts, he said that, while it was true that developing countries should seek to strengthen their development capacity, no single economic model or solution could be applied to all countries.

60. Finally, he said that unilateralism was a serious threat to the economic development of developing countries and that coercive political and economic measures that went against the principles and aims of the Charter of the United Nations and international law should never be tolerated or justified.

61. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that FAO, like other agencies in the United Nations system, had moved expeditiously to implement the Outcome of the historic 2005 World Summit. Food security remained a persistent development problem. Progress in improving nutrition and reducing hunger was essential to the achievement of most of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty was both a cause and a consequence of hunger, for hunger negatively affected health, labour productivity and investment choices, thus perpetuating poverty. Developing countries lost billions of dollars each year in earnings foregone due to hunger and nutritional deficiencies, yet investment in hunger reduction was too often seen as "welfare". In practice, however, such investment had the potential to generate huge economic returns.

62. Because the vast majority of the poor in developing countries earned their living from agriculture, no sustainable reduction in poverty would be possible without improving rural livelihoods. Countries that had invested, and that continued to invest, in agriculture now experienced the lowest levels of undernutrition. It was therefore opportune that the theme for World Food Day 2006 was "Invest in Agriculture for Food Security".

63. Finally, after drawing attention to the decision taken at the FAO Conference in 2005 suggesting that 2009 be declared the International Year of Natural Fibres, she assured the Committee of FAO's full support and of its readiness to work to the fullest extent possible with all partners in the observance of the upcoming International Year of Forests.

64. **Mr. Ndjonkou** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that while significant progress had been made in the past year in various forums towards making decent work a global goal, the fact remained that half of all workers in the world continued to live on less than US$ 2 a day and many of them had no social security or health benefits as they worked in the vast informal sector. In that context, ILO was continuing to devote substantial resources to promoting social justice as its overall objective. At the national level, it was promoting decent work programmes, focusing on the four pillars of the ILO decent work strategy: jobs, rights, social protection and social dialogue. Through its More and Better Jobs for Women programme, the Organization was demonstrating how more and better jobs were central to translating growth into less poverty, enhanced welfare and social equity. At the regional level, ILO was assisting, inter alia, in efforts to promote international labour standards, combat forced and child labour and address the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, and it was also contributing, through work-related initiatives, to disaster relief and reconstruction efforts in countries affected by the 2004 Asian tsunami.

65. Experience showed that employment, and the promotion of enterprises that created it, remained the most effective route out of poverty. ILO therefore stood ready to contribute to efforts to create jobs that would generate wealth and to ensure that workers had the skills they needed to perform those jobs.

66. **Mr. Avalle** (World Bank), highlighting some of its ongoing efforts to combat poverty, said that during the past fiscal year, the Bank had committed US$ 23.6 billion in grants and credits to developing countries and had made sub-Saharan Africa its top priority. The recently introduced Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative would provide many low-income countries with additional resources that could be channelled towards national development priorities.

The Bank was also committed to implementing the measures laid out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

67. Empowering poor people to lead productive lives and make sound decisions about their future was at the centre of the Bank's anti-poverty strategy. Accordingly, it had increased support for education, health and promotion of gender equality and economic opportunities for women. The Bank also integrated environmental and social concerns into all its development-related work and it was developing a clean energy investment framework to meet the challenge of securing affordable and cost-effective energy for growth while preserving the environment. Over the past year, the Bank had stepped up governance and anti-corruption efforts and developed a strategy for helping developing countries build capacity and accountability to deliver services to the poor, promote private-sector-led growth and tackle corruption effectively. The strategy also aimed to ensure the highest fiduciary standards in Bank operations and to achieve expanded Bank engagement with a wider range of non-governmental constituencies and institutions, including more emphasis on engagement with the private sector to help reduce bribery.

68. Long-term poverty reduction would require sustained improvement in the investment climate. In many poor countries, burdensome regulations constrained business activity and entrepreneurship, thus inhibiting job creation. The International Finance Corporation, the World Bank Group's private-sector arm, was working to provide policymakers with tools for regulatory reform. The Bank regretted the deadlock of the Doha Round negotiations and remained committed to expanding funding for the Aid for Trade Initiative and to working with low-income countries to incorporate trade needs into national development strategies.

69. In conclusion, regarding two issues raised by delegations — voice and participation of developing countries in the Bretton Woods institutions and support for middle-income countries — he said that, at the 2006 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, the Bank had renewed its commitment to continue support for such countries and had discussed the matter of voice and participation at length. In the light of the IMF progress report on quota reform, the Bank would consult with shareholders to advance the issue of participation in its governance structure and processes.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.